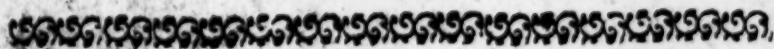


Mr. *A S G . . L's*

Congratulatory

LETTER.



8.

Mr. ^{John} A S G : : L's

207

Congratulatory

LETTER

TO THE

L^{or}d B^{isho}p of *Sarum*,

Upon the Excellent

MODERN PREFACE

Just Publish'd

By his L^{or}dship p.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN MORPHEW
near Stationers-Hall. 1713.

Price Three Pence.



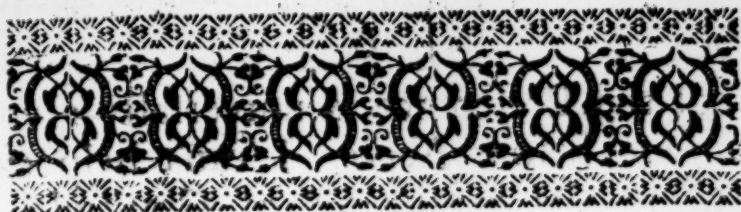
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Mr. A S G . . L's

Congratulatory

LETTER, &c.

MY LORD,



HERE I a Person of that happy Genius, either for printing of *Dedications*, or framing of Stories, which has of late render'd a Namesake of Your L.....p's wonderfully remarkable; I should not have been so *tardy*, in giving You Joy upon the Laudable Occasion Your L.....p not many Days ago furnish'd out to the World. But calling to mind a good old Proverb, whereby I am informed,
That

That the Preference is universally given to *Late* before *Never*, I can't help expressing the Sentiments of Gratitude I shall ever retain for Your L.....p's grand Performance.

In the first place, I cannot, enough commend Your studious Endeavours (however unsuccessful) to copy after the famous B.....p of *S. A...ph*, in the Style, as well as Materials for compiling a *Preface suited to the Present Time*: And certainly, no Man will deny but that Your L.....p's *does* Begin, and at least *deserves* to End like His.

It is no Concern of mine, whether an Impression of *S. A...ph's* Lamentable *Sermons*, or a Third of Your L.....p's Memorable *Discourse*, was most enquired for by the Inferiour Clergy of this Kingdom; and therefore, I choose to wave the Discussion of that Point: But, regardless of the Clamours of a sort of Men, who affirm, That *both Your Works were printed for the sake of the Prefaces*, I would offer it to the Consideration of Your L.....p's Admirers, Whether allowing the Desire of our Churchmen to be equally impatient upon those Occasions, all the World will not bear me out

out in saying, Your L.....p's Book has the greater Appearance of Honesty, of the Two ; in as much as it contains Your Former, as well as Modern *Preface* ; whereas the B....p of S. A...ph was pleas'd to omit the One, because it did not well suit with the Other.

After my most humble Tribute of Thanks, as well for the Kind Intimation You have publish'd Abroad of Your *too* great Age ! as for the Edifying Notice of Your future ! Loss of that *Freedom* of *Speech*, which, You know, My L...d, proceeds from a generous *Freedom* in *Thinking* ; I must not pass over in Silence that high Courage and flaming Zeal with which Your L.....p lays about You, in describing the Ignorance of those unwary Men who apply themselves to You for *Orders*. Certainly, My L...d, be the *Effect* of Your *Preface* what it will, it was perfectly well *timed*. There was an extraordinary Piece come out just before it, in Favour of our new Sect of *Free-Thinkers* ; but, after C.ll.ns, and T.l.nd, and T.nd.ll, and the rest of our Legion, have join'd our Forces, and done all we can, it must be confess'd,

fess'd, our Work would be very little ad-
 vanc'd, were it not for the seasonable
 Assistance of two or three of Your
 L.....p's Bench, and such as *Cl.rke*,
H...dly, *Wh.st.n*, and some others of
 their Brethren. But now that Your
 L.....p does so heartily espouse our
 Cause, let me conjure You not utterly
 to despair. If, indeed, Your *Preface*,
 falling upon the Neck of the *Discourse*
of Free-Thinking, should not prove ef-
 fectual to wean the silly Populace in
 some measure from their Attention to
 the Priests, I will grant, that *the Gates*
of Hell shall never prevail: But think,
 My Lord, in what Esteem You are held
 of all those who have the Honour to
 be in Your L.....p's Division of
Low Churchmen; Think how cordially
 these will embrace our Party, now that
 they have Your L.....p's Word for't,
 That by much the greater Number of
 the Clergy are so grossly ignorant in
 Matters which so nearly concern them.
 They do not understand Your *Refine-*
ments upon plain Texts of *Scripture*!
 Their Tutors do not charge 'em to
 read *Whiston's Constitutions*, nor Your
Exposition! They never heard of Your
Catechism

Catechism large or small! They have not learnt so much as to quote the *Maccabees* in Opposition to *S. Peter* and *S. Paul*! They have not read even *Sidney*, *Harrington*, *Julian Johnson*, or the *Rights*! Nay, the Ignorance of some is such, That they have no Notion of Your L.....p's *Politicks* neither. They cannot apprehend, why You shou'd have Audience of Pope *Innocent XI.* at *Rome*, when poor King *J...s*'s Minister could not obtain that Favour! Tell 'em, Your L.....p receiv'd of his said Holiness, about Fourscore Thousand Pounds, to enable a Favourite of Yours to turn his Father out of Doors by Your Advice and Persuasion, their Hair stands on end! That You were instrumental in preserving the *Pope's Supremacy* in *France*, restoring *Presbytery* in *Scotland*, and in saving the *Protestant*, tho' with the Loss almost of the *Christian*, in *England*, they are quite stunn'd! That 'tis to Your happy Invention we are indebted for the Mortgaging of the Nation, they cannot account for it! So that in speaking of Scholars, one may safely pronounce, they have never learnt their *ABC*. This is the Truth of the Case,

B

My

My L..d; and yet these Men think it very hard Your L.....p will not admit 'em into Orders, or to the Care of Souls, because they are not of a Church *Law* as Your L.....p's.

Believe me, My Lord, I hugely admire the Spirit with which You expose such Persons. This is like a *tender* Father, who, instead of endeavouring to reclaim the Vices of his Children, makes it his Business to expose 'em.

But before I quit the Subject of the *Priests*, I cannot forbear acquainting Your L.....p, That 'tis with the highest Pleasure I contemplate Your Method of examining those who apply to You to be made so. Methinks I see Your L.....p lolling in an Easy Chair, when a young *Prig* from one of the Universities disturbs Your Repose, and demands *Ordination* at Your Hands.----- Well, What's your Name? My L..d, my Name is ----- . Whence come you? From *Oxford*, My L..d. What College there? *Christ Church*, My L..d. What Books have you read? *Hammond, Barrow, Pearson, Beveridge, Bull, Wells, Mills, &c.* My L..d. What think you of *Le Clerc, Whitby, Burkett,*

Burkett, Henry, *Whiston*, the *Exposition* of the Thirty Nine Articles, or the *Racovian* Catechism? My L..d, I was never directed by my Tutor to read any of them.----- I thought so; but come then, supposing I were a *Jew*, how would you go about to convert me to *Christianity*? ----- And thus Your L..... p goes on, if it so happens that he answers all Your Objections on that Head, to make Yourself a *Turk*, a *Pagan*, &c. and if he does not give you Satisfaction upon the Whole, as 'tis Ten Thousand to one if he can, he is sent away like an ignorant Coxcomb, to seek for *Orders*, where he can get them. But if a Convert from the *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, *Anabaptists*, *Quakers*, or even a Gifted *Clothier*, or the like, addresses You upon the same Account, Your L..... p turns Your blind Side; he has You there, and passes Muster, not unlike the *Faggots* at t'other end of the Town.

'Tis much the same with respect to Your giving *Institution*; in which the highest Instance of Your Merit, that I can call to mind, is Your L..... p's refusing it peremptorily to Mr.,

because he was a Nephew of the late
B.....p K...n.

But how the Murrain came it to
pass, that after such Testimonies of
Your L.....p's Good-Will towards
us, and the obliging Account you have
given the World of the Stupidity of
the *English* Clergy, You had like to
have spoil'd all, by avowing, That
Scandal is but seldom charged upon
Any of 'em? This had been an un-
pardonable Slip, My L..d, but for
what went before, and what follows
after. So we take You all together, in
our *Congratulations*; as Your L.....p
will find by and by. But pray let that
be omitted, if You please, in the Next
Edition of Your *Preface*.

Your dismal Warning of the immi-
nent Ruin hanging over THIS Church,
which stands so much in Your L.....p's
Light, is truly Matter of great Grief
to me. Depend upon't, I take You
right, My L..d. You have vented a
great deal in one Word. You have
discharged Your Conscience, in *steadily*
pursuing (right or wrong, You do not
pretend to Infallibility) such Methods
as You took to be most conducive to
the

the Interests of **THIS** Church. Happy Epithet! that may so easily be appropriated by all Your L.....p's Friends, whether at *Rome*, *London*, or *Geneva*. Nevertheless, I must advise Your L.....p, That those of the Church of *England* will not take it to themselves, but insist, That She is now in the most flourishing Condition She ever enjoy'd since You was advanc'd to the **POST**, which unhappily lies so long and so heavy upon Your Hands, and is the Grief and Burden of Your Life. But let that pass. Every body knows, Your L.....p is too well skill'd in *Politicks*, and too well vers'd in *Your Religion*, ever to speak or act without Reserve, and without a *Salvo* to any future Alterations or Additions You shall think fit to make: But Every body is not a Judge of the Aptness of Your L.....p's Epithets, nor let into the Secret of a well-chosen **THIS**. Which may therefore be look'd upon as a Master-Piece.

As to Your L.....p's Character of the *Low* Churchmen, I must tell You, I neither take it to be just; nor if it were, should I well like it. For, most People
take

take the *Church as by Law Eſtabliſhed* to be the *Church of England*, and will do ſo, in ſpite of all that Your L.....p can do to perſuade them off on't. And therefore, tho' at a Viſitation or ſo, You might tell the *Fellows* about You, That You know of no *Church by Law Eſtabliſhed*, except that of *Rome*; yet I wiſh, You had left the *Eſtabliſhed Cant* out of Your *Preface*, where it does You no manner of Credit.

At the ſame time, I much approve of Your L.....p's Notions of a *Comprehenſion*. To rail bitterly againſt the *Universities*, and the *Clergy* in general; and to perſuade to *Moderation and Forbearance in Love*, with regard to the *Differents*; muſt needs meet with the Good-Liking of all the *Freethinkers* in *England*, whom Your L.....p has moſt kindly ſtruck out of Your Liſt of *Adverſaries*, together with our Friends the *Deiſts*; for which You have our hearty Thanks.

On the other hand, My Lord, the Artifice with which You proceed in diſtinguiſhing between the *Papiſts* and *Differents*, is admirable. It may be objected indeed, That in Your Speeches
againſt

against the *Occasional Conformity Bill*, You formerly represented the *Dissenters* as a strong and *formidable* Part of the Nation, whom it would be very *dangerous* to provoke, or give any *Uneasiness* to; and, That You now on the contrary look upon 'em as a *Handful* of Men, not *able* to do US true *Protestants* any material Damage. But what of all that? Is Your L.....p bound by such narrow Rules, as to be debarr'd the Acting or Speaking inconsistently sometimes? That would be a good one indeed! Compare Your Works of *Charles II.* with those of *William III.* and the present Queen. However, to proceed with Your L.....p. It is, as You say, apparent enough, That the *Dissenters* are *content* with their *Toleration*. Poor Wretches! there is not the least Murmuring heard on their behalf. They quit their beneficial Places to the Churchmen without Reluctancy; as Witness *The Ass, or the Serpent*, by Mr. *Thomas Bradbury*, &c. Whereas the *Papists* are to be taken in Pieces, and consider'd upon more than one Account. They hold *Transubstantiation*! They hold *Purgatory*! They pray to *Saints*, and
prostrate

prostrate themselves before *Images* ! What then? These are not intolerable Errors, but might easily be borne with, as other Mens are. But the Devil on't is, the *Popish Priests* have a Design to engross the *Riches* of the Universe into their *own* Clutches: So Your L..... p wisely surprizes them with a *Hold there; I'll come in for a Snack*. This is what I contend for, and will do, with Might and Main, as long as I live. They shan't have All to themselves. I hate every thing that has a Tendency that way. ----- You are much in the right, My L..d.

As for the Independency of the Church upon the State, Your L..... p, in labouring that Point, has quoted a Text of Scripture, which obliges me to pass it over unregarded. But I will bear Your L..... p Witness, That You are not for Unchurching any Body, so much as One, at home or abroad. And I am glad of this Opportunity to mention, That when certain Gentlemen waited upon You at the Door of the House of L..ds, for Your Charitable Contribution towards buying up Common-Prayer-Books for the Indigent Scots,
You

You bravely rebuked them with a *Get ye gone! You are serving the Cause of Faction and Schism!*

When Your L..... p goes off from Your Descants upon such Notions as seem to look towards *Popery*, and comes to talk of *Obedience* to our *Princes* for *Conscience Sake*; I either misunderstand You, or wish I did. And yet I must confess, what You say presently after of the *Revolution* and King *James*, may compensate for a Mistake of that Nature; and the rather, because it might be made with Design.

But what does Your L..... p mean, I wonder, by representing the Person who calls himself King *James's* Son, as *loaded with Indignities*? Why, I thought, no *Indignity* cou'd possibly be put upon him! Your L..... p might as well have told every body, That his Father, when upon his Death-bed, charg'd him, *if ever it pleas'd God to send him to rule over us, to avoid the Rock upon which he had split, viz. the Alteration of Religion*; and, That he promis'd so to do. But we would not have all the World know that.

C

As

As for the Affairs of the *Convocation*, I leave it to Dr. *Atterbury* to defend them if he can.

Your L.....p does well to deny any Effect wrought by the *Occasional Bill*, tho' our Friend *Daniel* says, about Twelve Thousand Families of *Dissenters* are ruin'd by it. Alas for THIS Church! --- But I can't see why your L.....p, who had so much to say against that Bill formerly, should now let it pass without a Stroke at it. There must be something in what the *Examiner* alleges concerning Mens Acting by *Sympathy* and *Antipathy*.

My L..d, I cannot apprehend the Reason of Your Challenges and Appeals, relating to the punctual Discharge of Your Duty as a B....p: And that, because it has given Ground to the Reaping up of many an ugly Story of Your Faults in that respect; such as the Dispensing with that necessary Residence for which You appear to be such a Stickler in several of Your Writings and *Discourses*. Besides, I think there was no Need on't; for were Your L.....p to swear till You are black in the Face, You are sure not
to

to be believ'd in any Thing You assert, by One Man in Five hundred. On this Occasion, I'll inform You what happen'd the other Day, in a Place not far off. Says a Gentleman of the Gown to his Friend, I heard the B....p of S.... tell my L..d of E..y a pretty Story, of Dr. O..ly, whom the Queen is now going to make a B.... p. It is, That as a certain *Whig* Gen...I was travelling into *Ireland*, he made the Dr's House in his way, and was very liberally entertain'd by him. After they had liv'd very plentifully, says the Dr. to the Gen...I, You must see my Study before you go, so leads him into the Cellar, shews him Six and Thirty Dozen Bottles of *French* Claret, and tells him, That was his Study. But, the Answer of the whole Company to this Account was, That whoever dared to tell such an abominable Falshood of a Gentleman of Dr. O..ly's Character, would not stick at swearing Any thing. And this, indeed, is all we get by a good Number of our Stories, which, in my Opinion, were better let alone than handed about.

Your Witticism upon the *Nonjuring* Clergy, one of whom has given Your
L.....p

L.....p ample Cause of Resentment, is very good. They have not Your L.....p's true Ground of Zeal, and are therefore an *Indigent*, tho' stirring People. Now, Poverty, with Us, is always true Ground of Reproach, and oftentimes of Repartee. If they look for a new Face of Things, they are not, however, to be blam'd for that, Your L.....p avowedly wishing it.

I shall not meddle with the Vindication of A.....p T.....n, in the short Compass of a *Letter* to Your L.....p. My Friend Mr. C.H.ns has made honourable Mention of him, in his *Discourse of Free-Thinking* before-mention'd : And so I decline the Pursuit of his G...e's Character, during his Enjoyment of that high POST, to which Your L.....p has e'er now aspired.

I must be so plain to Your L.....p, as to declare my Incredulity touching the late Q...n's joining with You in any of Your Schemes, particularly with relation to the Church. However, I make no question of Your L.....p's good Designs for the Consummation of our Political State ; which was in a
fair

fair way till within these Three Years, and had, perhaps, been effected by this time, but for the vigorous Attacks made upon it by Dr. S.....l, and one or two more, who shall be nameless. But, at present, Things run on in such a Course, that I am verily persuaded, they will cause our Distraction, if not prevented by Your L.....p, and some others; so that *Hanging Fitts* may indeed come on apace, as a Friend of ours has it.

When Your L.....p was lately visiting Sir O...n B.....m at R...d...g, Nothing in the World could be more positive, than Your Assertion, That You expected no other than to be sacrificed very speedily to *Popish* Fury. Nevertheless, when You now talk of Fiery Tryals, You abate somewhat of Your usual Warmth, and insert an *If* or two, which salves the Grimace of such flashy Stuff. This I should by no means like, but that I know Your L.....p's Friends will venture farther in their Discourse, than You have done in Your *Preface*, and not fear to assert, That the Face of Things is as bad as You and They really wish it.

To

To cast the grossest Reflexions upon the *Grand Monarque*, even though the Q...n has vouchsafed to admit a Minister from him, is highly becoming Your L.....p's Character and Station. The *Peace*, in short, (that Accomplishment of all his vast Designs) will assuredly prove Our Ruin, My L..d. Therefore, the Thoughts of it excite Your keenest Expressions of *Spite* and *Malice*.

On the other hand, You pursue Your Modern Doctrine, in not sparing even the Q...n now reigning. Tho' not one of the Allies ever furnish'd half his Quota, and poor *England* paid for All; yet We will have it, That if the Q...n does not heap on every one of them, till he says *It is enough*, (and God knows when that would be) why, She is a Violator of Solemn Treaties, and relies upon the Word of a Prince, who, tho' older by some Years than Your L.....p, you are sure will live to make us pay dear for our Peace and Plenty.

This, My L..d, is as pleasant, as our constant Assertion, That *Spain* and the *Indies* are given to the *French King*,
after

after the Queen has told us, *France* and *Spain* are now more effectually divided than ever.

Would the present Q...n and Ministry but leave out all Mention of the *Hanover* Succession, in the Articles of Peace now upon Conclusion, as the late K. *W.....m* and his Ministers did that of Her Majesty in those of *Ryswick*: Or, would they but sacrifice the Protestants of *Germany*, just as our Friends did, by the 4th Article of that Treaty; What a glorious Field of Rallery would this open for us? which at present we have no Prospect of.

But to conclude. I need not wish You Joy upon the happy Omen of the D. *d'A-----*'s House. So, begging Your L.....p's Pardon for the Mistakes You may find in this Letter, (for I had not Time to hand it thro' the *Temple* in Manuscript) I heartily wish You a good and speedy *Translation*, and am, My L..d, &c.



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